

Millersville at Fall Creek Valley
Village and Corridor Plan
Village Work Group
Oct 19, 2010 meeting minutes

Approximately 25 persons attended the October 19th meeting. Staff began the meeting by reviewing the purpose of the work group and some of its potential products: detailed land use recommendations, alternate redevelopment proposals and sample streetscape designs.

Staff provided background information showing development changes through historic aerial photography. Staff also handed out a summary of the comprehensive plan as it relates to Millersville. Staffs explained the two components of the plan: Community Values and Land Use.

Staff noted that the recommendation in the land use plan for the area is Village Mixed Use. The Comprehensive plan contains a generic description for all the Village Mixed Use area in the county plus an individual description for each one called a Critical Area.

The generic description of Village Mixed Use is:

This land use category consists of a development focused on a mixed-use core of small, neighborhood office/retail nodes, public and semi public uses, open space and light industrial development. Residential development densities vary from compact single-family residential development and small-scale multi-family residential development near the "Main Street" or "Village Center" and progress to lower densities outward from this core. Village mixed use areas are intended to strengthen existing, historically rural, small towns and cities within Indianapolis, which are intended to continue as neighborhood gathering places and should allow a wide range of small businesses, housing types, and public and semi-public facilities. This category should be compatible in size and scale to existing villages in Marion County. It will allow development of residential and limited commercial uses on smaller lots than in other sections of rural and suburban Indianapolis.

Potential development in these areas should focus on design issues related to architecture, building size, parking, landscaping and lighting to promote a pedestrian-oriented "village" or "small town" atmosphere, rather than focusing on residential density. Strip commercial development (integrated centers setback from rights-of-way by parking areas), large-scale freestanding retail uses and heavy industrial development are generally inappropriate within this land use category. The Plan anticipates that this category will typically be designated as a critical area. The Plan also anticipates that development of property with this recommendation would result from a public input process.

Critical area #32 located at 56th Street and Emerson says:

Why critical: This area is a commercial node that serves the surrounding neighborhoods and is the crossroads of several major streets and the Fall Creek Greenway. The commercial uses in this area were not developed in a coordinated manner and do not physically relate well to each other. Remnants of the historic town of Millersville still exist in this area.

Recommendations:

- This area has been designated as Village Mixed-Use to encourage future development in the area to occur in ways that are more coordinated, physically connected to the community and pedestrian friendly. Any major redevelopment of the area should be based on a “Main Street” or “Village Square” prototype.
- Retain the historic structures in the area. These exist along Millersville Road and on the northwest corner of Emerson Way and Kessler Boulevard.
- Pedestrian connectivity should be strengthened throughout the Critical Area by the construction and upkeep of sidewalks, safe street crossings and connections to the existing Fall Creek Greenway Trail. New development or redevelopment of commercial properties should include clear, safe access for pedestrians. Drive-through-only establishments would not be appropriate for this pedestrian-oriented area.
- Expand the greenway trail upstream as shown in the Indianapolis Greenways Master Plan and the Marion County Bicycle Plan.
- Large expanses of parking should be broken up with landscaping.
- The wooded areas designated as Environmentally Sensitive should be preserved to the extent possible.

Staff asked attendees if these two descriptions are appropriate starting points for our planning process. The answer was yes.

There followed a discussion of other assets, resources, concerns, issues and visions that the Work Group should take on. Comments included:

- Need for pedestrian connectivity and multimodal transportation facilities
- Lack of identity
- Underdeveloped retail, buildings do not relate to each other
- Building orientation is a problem
- Welcome signs are needed
- Enhance the medians; start with the easy projects first, residents can beautify the area so that will not be a burden to the City.
- Lack of a unified look
- Mediocre architecture needs enhancement
- Start with lamp post, signage and benches to make it look quaint
- Architecture theme like Fort Ben's (red brick)
- Establish an authentic identity, or brand: what the area should be known as and what it should be known for.
- Rethink the access into Windridge Shoppes
- Large-scale apartments are not desirable; apartments along Fall Creek and Shadeland have problems.
- Slow down the traffic on 56th Street and Emerson Way. The speed limit on 56th Street is 40 mph.
- The Emerson Way bridge over Fall Creek has vegetation overgrowing it and is not safe for pedestrians or cyclists.

- Public restrooms are needed along the greenway.

Question: What is the best way to implement projects? A combination of the City, neighborhood organizations, and businesspersons.

Question: Will this group talk about narrowing down 56th Street from Emerson to Roxbury. Connectivity work group will work on it, but we can address the issue.

Question: Is there funding available? No, however we do have some tools available such as a Business Improvement District (BID) and redevelopment areas.

Question: Are there some tax incentives for retail? Not usually.

Question: Could a committee have access to a small business loan? Staff will ask the City's Economic Development section.

Question: Are there suggestions to how we can change the buildings? One potential tool is a façade grant program. For example the Southeast Neighborhood Development Corporation (SEND) in Fountain Square has had a program where one-half of the cost of a façade renovation is paid for up to a certain amount. The grant also includes architectural services. Because Fountain Square is a historic district there are design guidelines for the façade renovations.

Question: How did Binford Redevelopment and Growth (BRAG) get started? A grass roots organization started in 2005. They received \$15,000 for Stanley Solutions, Best Lock Corporation. Local Initiatives Support Corporation selected BRAG to become a Great Indy Neighborhoods Initiative (GINI) quality of life plan.

BRAG had only two strips centers with local landowners to work with. Residents support their business and shop BRAG.

- We need to approach places like Cardinal Fitness about opening a location in Windridge.
- Get rid of Fall Creek Parkway behind Windridge but keep the levee and create a park there. There might be utilities under the road. The City has a process called vacation to close a public street but abutting property owners must support vacating the street.

Question: How much parking is needed for Windridge shops? Parking ratios have changed since 1973; staff will look into the amount needed for the current shops. The owner said he is willing to sell the pond.

That area would be a great place for an art festival or a community event. There is a need for a place to assemble and gain a sense of community.

Question: Can we remove the billboard or rent it out as a welcome sign to Millersville? Staff will look into it.

Question: Is there a chance for a new grocery store in Windridge? We do not know.

Next meeting: Nov 16th at 7:00 p.m. at Cathedral High School